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EDITORS' TABLE.

EDITORS: E. D. COPE AND J. S. KINGSLEY.

FOR twenty years the AMERICAN NATURALIST has played an important part in the history and development of American science. In the seventeen thousand pages which compose the twenty volumes there is contained not only an epitome of the world's scientific progress but a large proportion of the original investigation carried on in this country. The magazine has won for itself an honorable place in the scientific literature of the world, and to-day its position is higher than ever before. Through these twenty years it has pursued but a single policy, and in its fundamental features it is, in 1887, the same that it was in 1867. It has constantly aimed to make American natural history prominent, and to occupy a happy medium between a technical magazine and one in which all science is sacrificed to popularity. It has aimed to instruct rather than to amuse; it has sought accuracy rather than elegance of diction. Throughout it has aimed at independence, and its columns have ever been open to all. There have been many changes in these twenty years, but these have been in way of expansion, rather than alterations of the original plan.

In mere size alone the development has been considerable. The volume which has just been closed contained nearly twice the matter that was given twenty years ago. Then fifty writers contributed notes and longer articles to a single volume, now the contributors number nearly one hundred. In the beginning there were four editors, now the editorial corps numbers nine. In the first number the minor notes were grouped under the heads of Botany, Zoology, and Geology. To-day it has, besides these, departments of Anthropology, Embryology, Entomology, Geography and Travels, Microscopy, Mineralogy and Petrography, Physiology and Psychology, as well as one embracing the miscellaneous scientific news of the day. All of these facts show progress, and apparently a growth in the right direction. They indicate that the magazine had friends and has made more friends; and to all these, both subscribers and contributors, the AMERICAN NATURALIST returns its most cordial thanks. In the past the editors and proprietors have endeavored to show their appreciation of public favor by increasing the size and improving the quality of the magazine. There is still room for improvement, and it is confidently believed that the present volume will surpass any of its predecessors, a belief that seems warranted by the reputation of the J. B. Lippincott Company of Philadelphia, which has assumed the business management. The enterprise shown by this house in other lines is an ample guarantee that in all that pertains to the mechanical execution the future volumes will be better than the past. It also ensures a wider field of influence and a larger circulation, and this, in turn, will result in still further improvements.

With the present volume there is a change in the editorial management. Professor A. S. Packard, to whom is due the credit of starting the magazine, and who has labored unceasingly for its success for twenty years, retires from the management. He has won the thanks of every lover of Natural History, and has fully earned the relaxation and release which his retirement will give him. Certainly no one has done more for the spread of a knowledge of nature than he. His place will be taken by Dr. J. S. Kingsley, of Malden, Massachusetts, who needs no introduction to the readers of this journal, and who prefers to begin his editorial labors without further announcement. The department of Entomology will be in the able hands of Professor J. H. Comstock, of Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

In the years 1878 and 1880 Congress, by concurrent resolution, ordered the publication "by the public printer, with the necessary illustrations," of the third and fourth volumes of the final report of the U. S. Geological Survey of the Territories, at that time under the direction of Dr. F. V. Hayden. These volumes were to contain the reports on the Tertiary and Mesozoic Vertebrata of the West, by Professor E. D. Cope, which were to be based on materials preserved in the collection of that naturalist. On the faith of these resolutions of Congress, Professor Cope undertook extensive explorations in all parts of the far West, at his own expense, examining various regions from Southern Texas to Northern Montana, and from Kansas to Oregon and California. This was necessary, since Dr. Hayden's survey was not in a financial position to sustain the expenses of the investigations in the field of vertebrate palæontology, and he had no other collectors of vertebrate fossils than those employed and paid by Professor Cope. The result was the accumulation of a large amount of material, which includes about one thousand species of vertebrata from all the vertebrate-bearing horizons in the Western half of North America, excepting one, and a large amount of material from most of the Eastern bone-bearing beds.

In 1880 the survey under Hayden was abolished on pretence of a consolidation, which was never carried into effect, and a new survey was organized under the direction of Major J. W. Powell. The unfinished work of the Hayden survey was placed in the hands of Major Powell by the following order of the Secretary of the Interior, Teller:

> "WASHINGTON, Sept. 27, 1882.
>
> "MAJ. J. W. POWELL,
> "*Director U. S. Geological Survey, City:*
>
> "SIR,—The letter of Dr. H. V. Hayden, dated June 27th, bearing your endorsement of July 20th, relating to the unpublished reports of the survey formerly under his charge, is herewith returned.
>
> "You will please take charge of the publications referred to in the same in accordance with the suggestions made by Professor Hayden.
>
> "It is the desire of this office that these volumes shall be completed and published as early as practicable.
>
> "Very respectfully,
> "H. M. TELLER, *Secretary.*"

In spite of the above order, no part of Volumes III. and IV. of the Hayden series which was not previously in the printer's hands, has been sent to the Government printing-office, nor even been prepared for it since they came under the control of Major Powell. The verbal promise made to Dr. Hayden and Professor Cope by Major Powell, that part of the unfinished work represented by these volumes would be undertaken and completed as part of the work of the new survey, was not fulfilled; and inquiry finally elicited the statement from the director that this unfinished work would not be published by him.

Under these circumstances, Professor Cope, with the advice and consent of Dr. Hayden, applied to Congress for a small appropriation to pay the expenses of the preparation of the reports. The amount required per annum was three thousand eight hundred dollars, of which one thousand dollars was for an artist, seven hundred and twenty dollars for a preparateur of materials, and two thousand and eighty dollars for the preparation of the text and completing the reports. A lump amount was at first asked for in the winter of 1885–86, but failed for want of the approval of the Secretary of the Interior. The smaller amount asked for at the session of Congress of 1886–87 was approved by the Interior Department and by the Senate, but was lost in the conference between the committees of the Senate and House, during the last days of the term.

This explanation is due to the various palæontologists and others who are interested in the completion of the work so successfully begun sixteen years ago, and for which so many preliminary publications have been made. The long delay in publishing the illustrations, of which many have been prepared, is thus accounted for, although the inconvenience experienced by students is not diminished thereby.

Pending the consideration of the question by Congress, letters approving or urging its favorable consideration by that body were received from Professors Baird, Osborn, and Scott in this country, and Flower, Gaudry, Rütimeyer, and Zittel in Europe. Notes favoring such action by Congress appeared in the *Jahrbuch für Mineralogie* and *Cosmos* in Germany.

RECENT LITERATURE.

Ridgeway's Nomenclature of Colors.[1]—This work has a value to others than naturalists, for it gives first a large number of hints upon the selection of water-colors, pointing out thirty-six of the most useful and most permanent forms, and then how these can be combined to make one hundred distinct shades. Next is a comparative vocabulary of the names of colors in English, Latin, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Norwegian, and Danish. Illustrating this part of the work are ten colored plates, which contain one hundred and ninety-two distinct shades, each one named, while the explanation of each plate tells how these can be produced from the thirty-six colors deemed most essential for the water-color artist. As will readily be seen, this illustrated nomenclator renders the work of great value to the artist as well as to the naturalist, who has frequently considerable difficulty in his descriptions, of deciding exactly the meaning of nearly synonymous terms. Could this nomenclature have a further

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[1] Ridgeway, Robert: A Nomenclature of Colors for Naturalists, and Compendium of Useful Knowledge for Ornithologists. 8vo. pp. 129, pls. 17. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1886.